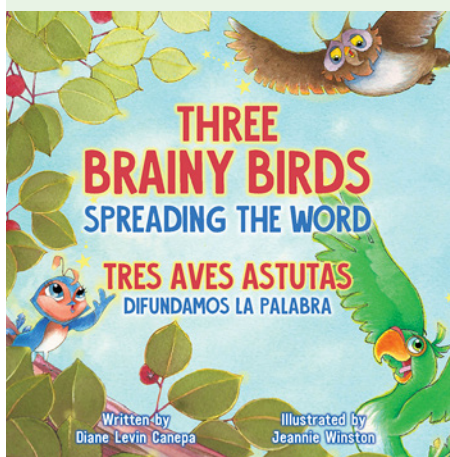




FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA'S THREE BRAINY BIRDS HAVE TAKEN FLIGHT!

It's official. First 5 California's (F5CA) Three Brainy Birds storybook is here! The Three Brainy Birds, Franco, the talking parrot; Orson, the reading owl; and Melody, the singing songbird, have their own bilingual book in English and Spanish.

The book made its debut at the 2018 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit, but is free to anyone to download from the F5CA parent [website](#). *Talk. Read. Sing.* It changes everything!® ✨



Camille's Corner

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California



Newsflash: Did you know that when you reach 11 years of age, you no longer have play dates? I was informed of this fact as my 11-year-old granddaughter rolled her eyes and explained to me that her play date days are over, and that hanging out with friends has arrived. That struck a familiar chord as I thought about the last few months at First 5 California (F5CA) and our latest opportunities to “hang out with friends.”

For instance, last month we hosted our third Child Health, Education, and Care Summit in Southern California.

Joined by over 700 of our closest friends and colleagues from around the state and across the country, we spent three days talking, learning, reading, networking, planning, and yes, even singing! Summit evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. Attendees thought the keynotes were thought-provoking, sessions contained useful information, and the opportunity to network with colleagues was outstanding. They also told us the rooms were too cold, so we will work on that for the next Summit. Thank you again to our generous sponsors and to all of you who attended. We can't wait for the next one, and our planning has already begun.

F5CA staff also had the opportunity to “hang out” with our Commissioners at a special commission meeting in April to begin work on our next Strategic Plan. Commissioners and staff discussed priorities and goals for the next iteration of the plan. We will spend the next year developing a five-year Strategic Plan that builds on the best of our current work and looks to support young children and their families in new and effective ways. Stay tuned for opportunities to provide us with your feedback and ideas in the near future. This issue of *Focus* also covers our regular April 2018 Commission meeting where the Commission approved funding for an updated version of our *Kit for New Parents*.

The peak of the legislative season is upon us, and First 5 made its presence known at the First 5 Advocacy and Family Fun Day. First 5 Commissioners

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In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10—the California Children and Families Act—and declared the importance of investing in a better future for California's youngest children. For the past 20 years, the California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) has established quality standards and invested in the development of programs and services emphasizing improvement in early education, child care, social services, health care, research, and community awareness. The vision of First 5 California is for all of the state's children to receive the best possible start in life and thrive.

First 5 20th Anniversary Celebration and Advocacy Day at State Capitol

On May 2, 2018, First 5 California (F5CA), the First 5 Association, and First 5 county commissions from across the state met at the State Capitol to celebrate the 20th anniversary of First 5. Beyond a celebration, First 5 representatives also used the opportunity to actively engage the State Legislature and the Administration on policy and budget issues that impact children ages 0 to 5 in California.

The Capitol lawn was full of fun, laughter, excitement, and learning as nearly 400 local children and families joined in on the celebration. Attendees modeled the magic of learning through play with various Family Fun Day activities, which included an art project led by F5CA's Executive Director Camille

Maben, a science experiment by Assemblymembers Marie Waldron and Jim Wood, a magic show by Senator Jerry Hill, a lively reading of F5CA's "Three Brainy Birds Spreading the Word" by Assemblymember Blanca Rubio and Senator Connie Leyva, and live appearances by Sesame Street Muppet, Rosita, and First 5 Santa Clara's Potter the Otter.

The magic continued throughout the day and into the Capitol as First 5 commissioners and staff met with California's leaders, advocating for \$1 billion for babies in this year's budget. First 5 "20 Years" posters covered the office doors of the Capitol, in addition to a powerful display of California's children and families on the wall outside the Governor's office.

During an awards ceremony, Assemblymembers Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Dr. Joaquin Arambula, and Kevin McCarty were honored as First 5's 2018 "Champions for Children" for their work on key bills that impact our youngest learners and their continued dedication to the children and families of California. ✱



Sesame Street Muppet Rosita and fans



California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon



California State Senator Jerry Hill



California State Assembly Bill Package Showcases First 5 Priorities

This legislative season promises to be another exciting year for early childhood advocates. While not planned in advance as an “assembly package deal” for promoting critical early childhood education policies, the Assembly is moving a series of individual bills that together present a significant opportunity to move the field forward:

- Assembly Bill (AB) 2292 has been introduced by Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry, and is co-sponsored by First 5 California (F5CA) in partnership with the Child Care Resource Center and the California Child Development Administrators Association. AB 2292 is the policy companion to the Early Care and Education Coalition’s “one billion for babies” budget push this legislative season, and would codify crucial capacity-building tools for the child care system, including right-sizing the infant/toddler funding levels for Title 5 programs; launching a start-up fund for child care facilities, equipment, and professional development needs; and expanded licensing attainment support. AB 2292’s components are the top items identified by the child care field as necessary for building access to a stronger, high-quality system. In particular, AB 2292 is focused on the system building blocks for providing more access to babies ages 0 to 2. Currently, only 14 percent of eligible infants and toddlers have access to affordable child care.
- AB 2626 (Mullin) is being sponsored by State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) Tom Torlakson, and is a solution to provide statewide innovations and flexibilities piloted in child care programs in San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda, and Santa Clara counties. After last year’s legislative session, when eight more counties stepped forward to pursue the same flexibilities as the four pilots, the SSPI is arguing that all counties and children should be allowed to benefit from the pilot innovations, including 24-month family eligibility, regional rate flexibility, and paid professional development days.
- AB 2960 (Thurmond) is being sponsored by the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network



Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry

and strongly supported by F5CA. Responding to reoccurring recommendations from both the Right Start Commission and the Learning Policy Institute to create a “no wrong door” online child care portal for parents, AB 2960 would codify the Consumer Education database statewide, and task a stakeholder group with creating a vision for online engagement between parents and a myriad of child care and expanded learning services.

- AB 1754 (McCarty) is a vehicle to codify the “Preschool Promise” reached between Governor Brown and legislative leadership to provide a preschool opportunity to all eligible four-year-old children in the year before kindergarten.
- AB 2001 (Reyes) would codify and streamline the best practice of family child care home education networks, and hopefully set the stage for expanding these networks statewide in order to increase children’s access to high-quality early childhood education programs.
- AB 11 (McCarty) is being sponsored by the First 5 Association, and championed by First 5 Los Angeles, to codify and scale best practices in early intervention strategies in pediatric visits.
- AB 992 (Arambula) is a policy vehicle for the two-year strategy to carve out California’s first statewide investment in evidence-based, voluntary home visiting programs.



Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula

With the Appropriation Committee’s hearing season up next, the fate of all these bills is unknown.

However, together they represent a great step forward in building a stronger early childhood education system across the state.

All of the legislation F5CA tracks, with sample letters of support for key legislation, can be found on our website at <http://www.cffc.ca.gov/about/organization.html#policyleg>. *

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

Bakersfield Homeless Center Serves Vulnerable Families

First Child Care Center in Homeless Shelter Provides Key Support

By Christine Lollar

Communications and Media Specialist, First 5 Kern

Among the halls of the Bakersfield Homeless Center (BHC) are families of all sizes, races, and ages. The reasons families become homeless are just as varied, with layers of complex challenges and each with their own unique story as they search for some semblance of stability. At the very core is a need to discover hope.

Barbara Gray's story is no less complicated. She spent more than a year at BHC. She is a mother to six girls, ages 5-13, and a 15-year-old son. Ms. Gray's life journey began amidst a childhood of abuse, a violent marriage, and eventual homelessness. It seemed as though her situation would never end, but a change in direction happened when her children reached the age of awareness.



BHC did not have a child care center, but understood that the impact of homelessness on families, especially children, is often traumatic. "We were not in the business of running a child care center, but we saw a tremendous need if these families were going to be successful," said BHC Executive Director Louis Gill.

"Breakfast was at 6:30 a.m. and when you get two meals a day, you don't miss it," Ms. Gray said. "The older kids caught the school bus at 7:45 a.m. and day care also starts at 7:45 a.m.," she explained. Add laundry, diapers, homework, and showers to the logistics for a mother with seven children, attending three different schools, and it boggles the mind. BHC's on-site day care creates a necessary village to support struggling parents getting back on their feet.

Discovery Depot is licensed for 25 children, 6 weeks to 5 years old. BHC professional staff includes a director, site supervisor, five teachers, and an administrative assistant. In addition, there is an afterschool program, Champ Camp, for school-aged children through high school. BHC also maintains a short-term child care center on-site that is used for informal occasions when children need short-term care.

Homeless children often do not have a chance to experience quality child care, putting them at risk for abuse, neglect, and exploitation. "Being a family in a homeless center is hard," said Mr. Gill. "We are a safety net. These little ones at the child care center have experienced more than average children and have been exposed to grinding poverty, mental illness, substance



"I didn't want my kids to have the same life I did," she said. "I wanted more for them and luckily I found the Bakersfield Homeless Center."

In 2017, BHC provided nearly 75,000 beds for homeless families, serving approximately 100 children and their families on an average night. Parents living in BHC are required to take their children with them wherever they go: to meals, to the playground, even to the bathroom.

BHC broke new ground in 2003 when it opened the first licensed child care center in California on the campus of a homeless shelter, Discovery Depot. At inception,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Bakersfield Homeless Center Serves Vulnerable Families

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)



and sexual abuse; some even victims themselves.”

BHC staff had to learn, adapt, and further educate themselves to recognize situational hazards in these settings and to be mindful of what parents weren’t taught themselves as children. “Before coming

here, most of the grown-ups haven’t had healthy adult/parent examples to learn from,” Mr. Gill said.

At Discovery Depot, parents see a loving staff where children learn in a structured environment. Children thrive on consistency and routine where they feel safe and stable in an environment they can count on. Eventually, the children learn to relax, be inquisitive, and feel safe enough to explore beyond their usual “fight or flight” instinct. In turn, adults learn what it is to be a good parent.

Ms. Gray’s youngest child will graduate Discovery Depot to attend kindergarten this fall. “To have this place for my kids has been such a relief. My babies learned to crawl here. I trust the staff,” she said.

Ms. Gray’s family has been housed at BHC since December 2016 and BHC’s Job Employment program has provided several years of work experience for Ms. Gray. She is one step away from achieving her goal of a full-time job. In addition, Ms. Gray is taking driving lessons and has purchased a minivan in preparation. “Even though I still don’t get the bathroom to myself,” she exclaimed, “BHC has helped me love my life again.”

First 5 Kern has funded the early childhood education programs of BHC for 20 years. “The funding we provide for Discovery Depot is truly filling a gap for families.

This program is unprecedented, but is successful and completely replicable. We hope other communities will consider doing the same thing,” said First 5 Kern Executive Director Roland Maier.

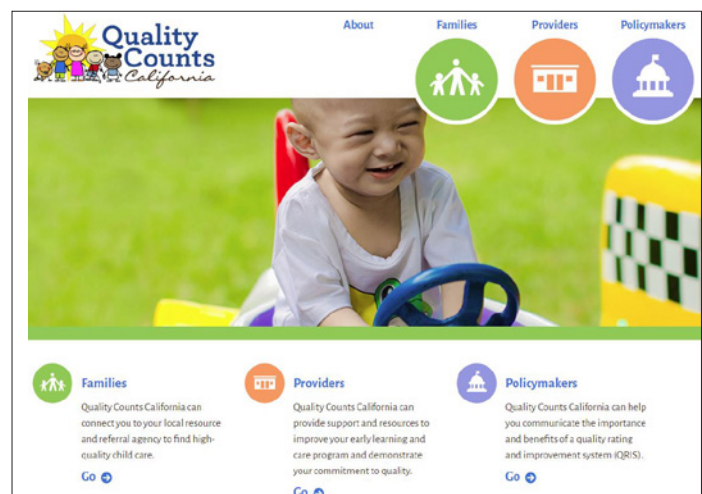
When asked why other shelters don’t have child care centers, Mr. Gill says, “Communities who are striving to end homelessness must not be afraid to try. This safety net for children and families provides proven, healthy outcomes right where they live.” ❁



Quality Counts California Unveils New Branding and Website

As covered in a previous *First 5 California Focus* ([February 2018](#)), the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Consortium has been rebranded as Quality Counts California. In March 2018, First 5 California (F5CA) and the California Department of Education (CDE) released the official logo with a new tagline: Quality Counts California—Raising the Quality of Early Learning and Care. These important steps completed the branding.

Additionally, a new Quality Counts California website was unveiled at F5CA’s Child Health, Education, and Care Summit last month. The new website is intended to become a one-stop shop for information for parents and families about high-quality early learning and care programs. The website also is designed to help providers with support and resources to improve their early learning and care programs, and assist policymakers on how to communicate the importance and benefits of early learning and care programs through QRIS.



Please help F5CA spread the word on the importance of quality early learning by sharing our new branding and website for QCC: <https://qualitycountscal.net/>. ❁

Summary of April 2018 State Commission Meeting

On April 25 and 26, 2018, the First 5 California (F5CA) Commission met in Sacramento, with a satellite location in San Diego. Highlights included the following:

APRIL 25, 2018 (2019–2023 STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING)

On April 25, 2018, the Commission launched a strategic planning process by soliciting input from commissioners and leadership staff on the direction of F5CA and on a vision for its next five-year strategic plan. The general consensus of the meeting was that the current strategic plan has been effective and is a strong starting place for a new plan, aligned to the intent of Proposition 10, but with the need for even better alignment with outcomes-based goals and historic First 5 work.

The Commission has a strategic planning committee, which will be engaged as the process evolves. They will bring updates to the Commission as needed. The Commission will review and provide feedback on a draft plan at the January 2019 Commission meeting.

APRIL 26, 2018 (REGULAR MEETING)

General Business

Chair Halvorson swore in new Commissioner Dr. Monica Fitzgerald, and looks forward to swearing in new Commissioner Molly Munger at the July Commission meeting. Commissioner Jaime was voted as new Vice Chair of the Commission.



George Halvorson and Lupe Jaime

Executive Director Report

Camille Maben provided updates on multiple topics, including a summary and feedback of the successful 2018 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit in Glendale (See Camille's Corner, page 1), and plans for the then-upcoming Advocacy Day.

State and Federal Budget and Legislative Update

The Commission heard from Erin Gabel, Deputy Director of External and Governmental Affairs, who provided an update on the status of the 2017–18 State Legislative Session, including F5CA "Level 1" priority bills and F5CA-sponsored legislation:

• First 5 California Sponsored Legislation

F5CA is the co-sponsor of AB 2292 (Aguiar-Curry) in partnership with the Child Care Resource Center and the California Child Development Administrators Association. As the policy companion for the Early Care and Education Coalition's budget push this year, this bill will develop crucial infrastructure for California's child care system by: 1) increasing state funding rates for infant and toddler care; 2) creating a grant program to fund implementation and startup costs for new or expanded child care facilities; and 3) expanding a fund to recruit a new generation of licensed family child care providers. AB 2292 will improve system capacity to provide access to quality infant and toddler care for California's youngest learners.

• First 5 California 2018 Budget Priorities

F5CA's 2018 budget priorities are focused on expanding system capacity for infant and toddler child care, including a \$1 billion increase in child care spaces to immediately improve access for California's families, investment in the capacity and infrastructure that will be needed to ensure increased services for infants and toddlers across the state, and supporting the Administration's innovative Home Visiting proposal for CalWORKs first-time mothers.

• First 5 California Initiatives

F5CA and the First 5 Association (Association) have launched initiatives around the allocation of Proposition 64 cannabis revenue, at the state and local levels, in order to ensure children's prevention programs qualify for and receive cannabis tax revenues. F5CA is contracting with the Council for a Strong America, led by former Assemblymember Susan Bonilla, in order to lead a charge in the Capitol

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Summary of April 2018 State Commission Meeting (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

that Proposition 64 funds are best spent on effective prevention strategies for children, starting early.

Kit for New Parents Contract

The Commission approved funding to continue production and distribution of F5CA's *Kit for New Parents*. The Office of State Publishing will take over as the *Kit* vendor on July 1, 2018. The contract will run through June 30, 2019.

Evaluation Update for First 5 IMPACT and Quality Counts California

The Commission heard from David Dodds, Deputy Director of the Evaluation Office, and Debra Silverman, Education Administrator of the Training and Continuous Quality Improvement Office, who provided updates on

Quality Counts California (QCC). The update focused on key findings from the 2016–17 Consortia Annual Performance Report (APR), Regional Hub APR, Partner Survey, and Common Data File. Commissioners were provided a 2017–18 QCC Data Brief which summarized these findings. The presentation also described evaluation plans by Child Trends to inform future funding requests and legislative advocacy. Regional representatives provided feedback on the vital role First 5 IMPACT funds play in their successful implementation of a local Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Visit http://www.ccfca.gov/about/2018_04_meeting_handouts.html for information on all April 2018 Commission meeting agenda items, handouts, and PowerPoint presentations. *

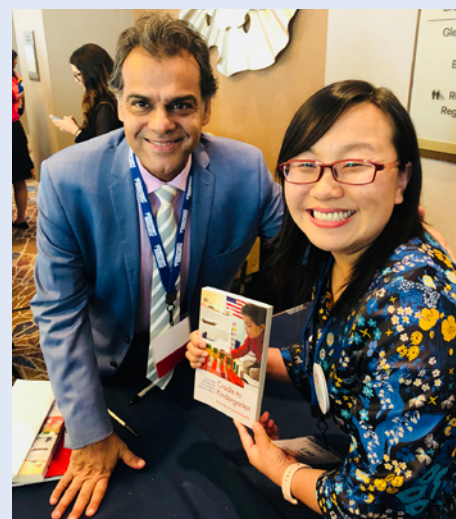
2018 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit



Dr. Andrew Meltzoff and Camille Maben



Mario Lopez



Dr. Ajay Chaundry and Lala Zhang



George Halvorson, Dr. Vincent Felitti, Lupe Jaime, Camille Maben, Muntu Davis, and Jim Suennen

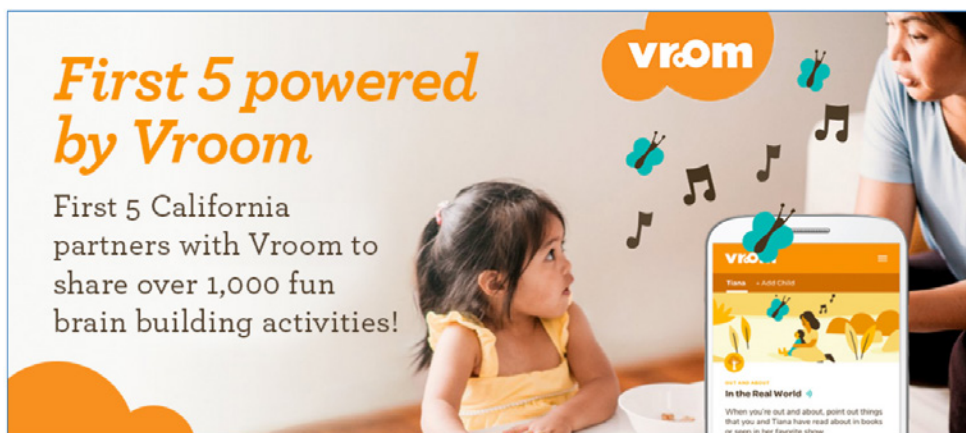


Summit attendees

Talk. Read. Sing.®'s Newest Collaborator: Vroom

First 5 California (F5CA) is thrilled to announce a new partnership with Vroom, a product of the Bezos Family Foundation. Vroom was born out of a need for creative tools and materials that inspire families to turn everyday moments into brain-building moments—a perfect complement to F5CA's mission.

Together, F5CA and Vroom are looking to maximize the reach of Vroom's science-backed activities and parenting tips, and collaborate on custom co-branded materials and online resources. Already, F5CA has begun implementing the partnership by highlighting Vroom's comprehensive mobile application (app) on F5CA's parents website. It links families to over



1,000 tips and activities that promote talking, reading, singing, and playing, and are broken out by age.

Check out the Vroom app through the Apple Store or Google Play by typing in Vroom or by going to F5CA's parents [website](#). *

Camille's Corner

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

and staff from both the state and county levels walked the halls of the state Capitol, met with Legislators, and honored several Champions for Children. Outside the Capitol building, young children visited the First 5 Express, where they crafted at least four hundred paper plate visors, conducted science experiments, and

enjoyed a visit by Rosita from Sesame Street. Children and adults alike learned a lot and had a great time.

Additionally, this issue of *Focus* highlights First 5 Kern County's efforts to support the homeless. In my latest visit to Kern County, I had the privilege of visiting its programs and seeing firsthand the local commitment

and dedication to this underserved population. Congratulations to Kern County on a job well done.

Coming up quickly in June is an important primary election, the result of which will narrow the large field of gubernatorial candidates to two. No matter who you vote for, the important thing is to vote. And our hope is that an outcome of this primary will be a strong pair of candidates who will make the health and education of young children a top priority.

In the meantime, I hope you and your family and friends find some quality time to "hang out." *



First 5 California Celebrates Dr. Seuss' Birthday with NBA Teams and Alumni

When First 5 California (F5CA) had the idea of pairing 6'7" tall professional athletes with 4- and 5-year-olds to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday, we knew the result would be adorable. We worked hard to ensure it was equally beneficial for the children. By partnering with high-profile athletes, teams, and sports media networks, F5CA creates community engagements that are not only memorable, but help spread our *Talk. Read. Sing.*® message to new and even wider audiences of parents and caregivers.

On March 2, 2018, F5CA worked with the National Basketball Association's (NBA) Sacramento Kings professional basketball team to create a reading celebration with over 250 preschoolers and their parents at Sacramento's Robla Preschool. Anticipating a high level of energy and the need to keep preschoolers entertained for 60 full minutes, F5CA worked with the Kings to bring former NBA player and current Kings television analyst Doug Christie to conduct story time with the children. Kings President of Business Operations, John Rinehart, ran a Dr. Seuss-inspired



Former Sacramento Kings player Doug Christie with preschoolers and parents in Sacramento

guessing game and the Kings "Breakers" performed break-dancing for an awestruck audience. The Kings, F5CA, and First 5 Sacramento staff all joined in, leading the children in music and singing to round out the celebration.

In addition, on March 9, 2018, F5CA conducted a similar celebration in a much more intimate setting in Watts, California. Partnering with Fox Sports West/Prime Ticket, F5CA arranged for former NBA star and current Los Angeles Clippers basketball team analyst Bruce Bowen to visit Imperial Courts Head Start to read and participate in arts-and-crafts with a very special group of 15 preschoolers.

Not only did all the children, parents, and caregivers in Sacramento and Watts have a great time, but it was an experience they'll never forget. The message was documented by Sacramento news stations KCRA, KFBK, and KQVR with interviews about F5CA and its *Talk. Read. Sing.* initiative, and the power of quality conversations with our babies.

Fox Sports West filmed their visit for their "Clippers Weekly" program. You can watch the segment here:

[Clippers and First 5 California](#) ✨



Former NBA player and current Los Angeles Clippers basketball team analyst Bruce Bowen reads to preschoolers in Watts